

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3956

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NOUAKCHOTT 1208

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS SL MR

SUBJECT: IMAPEC FISHING OPERATION IN MAURITANIA

REF: FREETOWN 1291 (NOTAL)

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. REFTEL NOTED THAT PRESIDENT STEVENS WAS IMPRESSED BY MAURITANIA-BASED FISHING OPERATION, INDUSTRIES MAURITANIENNES DE PECHE (IMAPEC), WHICH OPERATES OUT OF NORTHERN PORT OF NOUADHIBOU. FYI PRESIDENT STEVENS BRIEFLY TRANSITED NOUADHIBOU SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. END FYI. REFTEL REQUESTED AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON IMAPEC.

2. FOLLOWING DATA COMES FROM IBRD REPORT NO. 243-MAU DATED MAY 6, 1974, ENTITLED PRESENT SITUATION AND PROSPECTS OF THE MAURITANIAN ECONOMY AND FROM IMF DOCUMENT SM/75/2 DATED JANUARY 3, 1975, ENTITLED MAURITANIA-RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS: (A) IMAPEC, A SPANISH PUBLIC ENTERPRISE CREATED IN 1970, IS LARGEST FISHING OPERATION BASED IN MAURITANIA. IT HAS FACILITIES FOR SALTING, DRYING, CANNING,
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FREEZING, AND FISH-FLOUR PRODUCTION. IT EMPLOYS JUST OVER

500 PZGOANZOT EMPLOYEES, ALL BUT FOUR OF WHOM ARE MAURITANIAN
NAITONALS, AND ABOUT 700 DAILY OR SEASONAL MAURITANIAN
WORKERS. IT EXPORTS VIRTUALLY 100 PERCENT OF ITS
OUTPUT AND HAS ACCOUNTED FOR ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPORTS
OF FISH AND FISH PRODUCTS SINCE ITS INCEPTION. SINCE IT
BEGAN OPERATIONS, IMAPEC HAS INCURRED LOSSES TOTALING SOME
\$15 MILLION, MAINLY BECAUSE OF HIGH OPERATING COSTS AT
NOUADHIBOU AND UNDERUTILIZATION OF CAPACITY OWING TO
INADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF FISH LANDED THERE. (B) IMAPEC
PRODUCED FOLLOWING TONNAGE IN 1971 (IMAPEC CURRENT CAPACITY
SHOWN IN PARENTHESIS): DRYING PLANTS 7,767 (18,000);
FREEZING PLANTS 4,016 (15,000); FLOUR MILLS 16,202 (25,000);
AND CANNING PLANTS 3,012 (5,000). END UNCLASSIFIED
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3. SPANISH EMBASSY OFFICER, WHO DESCRIBED OPERATION AS
"FAILURE", TELLS US THAT IMAPEC IS CONTINUING TO LOSE MONEY.
HE SAID MAIN PROBLEM IS TOO MANY MAURITANIAN EMPLOYEES AND
TOO LITTLE PRODUCTIVITY PER EMPLOYEE. IMAPEC WAS INITIALLY
UNDER PRESSURE FROM GOVERNMENT LABOR UNION TO HIRE UNNECESSARY
PERSONNEL. ADDITIONAL PROBLEM HAS BEEN NECESSITY TO IMPORT
EVERYTHING, E. G. TIN CANS, IN ORDER TO SUPPORT ENTERPRISE.
THIS SITUATION HAS CREATED EXCESSIVE OPERATING COSTS.
EMBASSY OFFICER SAID FROZEN AND DRIED FISH PART OF OPERATION
IS MAKING PROFIT. CANNING AND FISH MEAL SEGMENTS ARE
LOSING MONEY. HE SUGGESTED THAT IF PLANT COULD CUT DOWN
ON MAURITANIAN PERSONNEL, BRING IN MORE EXPATRIATE HELP,
AND CONCENTRATED SOLELY ON FREEZING AND DRYING, IMAPEC
COULD MAKE TIDY PROFIT. IMAPEC IS CURRENTLY IN PROCESS
OF TRYING TO REDUCE STAFF; HOWEVER, THERE ARE APPARENTLY
POLITICAL PRESSURES TO CONTINUE ALL ASPECTS OF ENTERPRISE.
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